

In the Specification:

Please amend the specification at paragraph [0014] as follows:

During operation, the hide 12 is positioned on the support surface 14. The hide 12 is completely scanned by the scanning head 18 to determine the hide's periphery and the location of any defects. Subsequent to scanning, the controller 22 determines the location for the placement of individual pattern pieces 24 to be cut from the hide, a process referred to as nesting. Once the location of a nested pattern piece 24 is determined, and concomitant with the continued nesting of pattern pieces, the cutting head 20 cuts the pattern pieces whose location has been determined, from the hide. To aid in the cutting of the pattern pieces 24 from the hide 12, the hide can be drawn against the support surface 14 via vacuum supplied by a vacuum generator shown schematically at 26. To aid in the application of the vacuum, the peripheral edges of the hide 12 can be covered with a layer of impermeable material 28, such as a polymeric film. While the scanning and cutting heads, 18 and 20 respectively, have been shown and described as being mounted on a single carriage 16, the present invention is not limited in this regard as each of the scanning and cutting heads can be mounted on a separate carriage without departing from the broader aspects of the present invention.